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Next: The Future Just Happened [Review]

Drew Harrington
Pacific University

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Next: The Future Just Happened [Review]

Description

Review of *Next: The Future Just Happened* / by Michael Lewis. W.W. Norton, 2001. ISBN 0393020371.

Next: The Future Just Happened

Posted on **November 1, 2001** by **Editor**



by Michael Lewis

W.W. Norton, 2001, ISBN 0393020371

Review by Drew Harrington <harrington@pacificu.edu>

University Librarian, Pacific University

The Internet allows people to reinvent themselves—to slip on masks and perhaps to rewrite the rules of commerce and social structure. In highly entertaining journalistic style, author Michael Lewis presents irreverent snapshots of newsworthy on-line personalities and their ideas. He tells the stories of individuals who conduct their on-line lives without a sense of traditional “real-world” boundaries, or who have brainstormed innovative Internet-based ideas with the potential to challenge basic economic premises.

Jonathan Lebed, a 15-year-old stock market wizard, is the youngest person ever accused of fraud by the SEC. Markus Arnold, a teenaged legal “expert” who has never read a law book, is the favored advisor of thousands of people seeking legal guidance through AskMe.com. Hi-Tech engineers Mike Ramsey and Jim Barton developed interactive television—technology that is rapidly being adopted by hundreds of thousands of T.V. viewers who routinely bypass all advertisements. Lewis explores these and other fascinating stories to illustrate the far-reaching impact of the Internet on our lives, and the reality that “right” and “wrong” aren’t simple concepts. The rules of status, qualification, and professional connections simply may not apply on-line. Certainly the unwritten laws of business power and professional prestige are being challenged. Each story, by turns engaging and worrisome, serves up considerable food for thought. Readers are likely to force friends and family to “listen to this” and they read especially intriguing passages out-loud. The book is not scholarly, but it is the kind of book that begs discussion and the exchange of opinions. These personal Internet stories, small and large, suggest fundamental changes in society. The Internet allows outsiders to function as insiders, children to act as adults and laypeople to achieve the status of experts.

Previous books by popular author Michael Lewis include *Liars Poker*, *The New New Thing*, *The Money Culture*, *Pacific Rift*, and *Losers*.

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